



# ‘Badgers in the Landscape – Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’ Evaluation Report:           Year Three

## **1       Introduction**

This report is the culmination of a three year evaluation process, commissioned in 2017 by Scottish Badgers to examine and measure the impact of their project; *Badgers in the Landscape – Community Building for Wildlife Conservation*. This final stage will set down and review the complete data and statistics kept by the project over the three-year period of its existence and assess to what extent the project activities have met their stated aims and objectives. Comprehensive data will also be measured against the key outcomes within the remit of The Heritage Lottery Fund.

The evaluation exercise has been carried out by Jo Clifton of Devon Associates, who has had extensive experience in working in the voluntary and community sectors since 1989 and has carried out evaluations in those sectors since 1995.

## **2       Background to the Charity**

Scottish Badgers was formed in 1999, as an alliance of badger groups in Scotland, at the behest of Scottish Government and is a SCIO, Scottish registered charity (SC034297). It exists to educate the public, offer training to both members and other volunteers, work for adequate law enforcement in Scotland, and build a sustainable network across the country of local badger groups. Advice and guidance is given to statutory organisations, private companies, the Police, and individuals in forestry, agriculture, and house and road building, all of whom affect badgers greatly.

Scottish Badgers currently has an active membership of 354 and the work is carried out by two paid project staff: a Project Officer (full-time) and one (part-time) specialising in crime prevention and providing advice to Police Scotland and project members.

The charity is governed by a board of 6 Trustees, who work with a wider Advisory Group of another 8-10 members, representing both geographical areas and areas of interest. These groups meet both separately and together; usually 5 times a year. All of the trustees are hands-on, participating in both local badger groups and in areas of special expertise.

## **3       Reason for the Project**

The badger - the largest native mammal in the UK - is not an endangered species, but is subject to continuing persecution, both deliberate and unintended. They are found in every type of landscape, high moorland, sea shore, cliffs, etc. as well as traditional woodland. To raise the profile of the specie, its place in the landscape and a greater understanding of the wider biodiversity, Scottish Badgers work by gaining the involvement of local communities through the provision of information, training and support to promote and sustain active citizen participation.

The project’s resources have been concentrated in South Lanarkshire: an area of various small communities - many ex-coal mining - with economic problems. It has a lower than average application for charitable funding; with high rates of wildlife crime, which are mainly unresolved. The initial investigation revealed an enthusiasm by other agencies there to work in collaboration on these issues.

The project continues to hold 'badger-oriented' issues at its core, but also engages with local people - including children - in parallel and complementary activities connected to other native wildlife. This

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

approach has also been a key feature of their work with other NGOs and agencies, with which the project has worked in partnership.

#### **4           Partnership and Joint Working**

A significant number of project activities, throughout the life of the project, have involved various forms of joint working; all subject to agreed structures and conditions. These have ranged from a full partnership agreement [as in the case of Scottish Wildlife Trust]; joint working practices [as in the case of South Lanarkshire Council] or utilising the resources of another agency, such as RSPB.

In each case, the project entered into discussions and negotiations with these agencies – before commencing activities – to promote a mutual understanding and appreciation of the other’s values and ensure a commonality of approach and methods of working.

Joint working with South Lanarkshire Council has continued with varying degrees of engagement dependent on the Ranger time and their own priorities. The project consolidated its partnership with Scottish Wildlife Trust in the second year; allowing increased activity in the training programme; the volunteer programme and the monthly campaigns. The projects have agreed responsibilities in the two key joint initiatives - the national badger hub at Falls of Clyde Wildlife Reserve in New Lanark and Scottish Badger Week. Scottish Badgers cover the recruitment and support of the Badger Surveyors and Trail Camera Assistants; whilst Scottish Wildlife Trust carries out the role with the Badger Watch Assistants and Virtual Badger Champions.

No new partners have been brought into the project for the final year; focusing instead on the two existing partnerships with Scottish Wildlife Trust (through the national badger hub at Falls of Clyde) and with South Lanarkshire Council (through their Countryside Ranger Service). Both of these partnerships are progressing well and there has been a commitment from both partners going forward to increase the input in the current project area and expand activities into a broader geographical area.

Representatives of these partnerships have spoken very positively about the relationship, which has allowed all parties to share information, resources and experience.

#### **5           Findings**

##### **5.1       Training in Year 3**

- **Badgers for Beginner**

July 2018           11 people trained

- **Registered Badger Worker Level One training weekends**

April 2018           15 people trained,

Nov 18           10 people trained

March 2019       7 people trained

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

- **Basic Wildlife Crime Awareness**

March 2019                      14 people trained

- **Leaders and co-leaders course**

July 2018                        7 people trained

For numerical data for year three plus the totals for the duration of the project, see Appendix 1

## **5.2 Volunteer activity**

A new aspect of volunteer activity, involving the trail camera volunteers, based on their own interests and expertise, has been introduced this year, resulting in:

- Production of a promotional video for the project (viewable on the YouTube channel).
- A video on the issues badgers face
- A series of mini-documentaries called ‘Badger Bytes’ on badger biology, ecology, field signs and issues faced.
- A volunteer securing a regular slot on a local radio station and will be arranging regular publicity for Scottish Badgers and a separate one-hour feature on the charity.

## **5.3 Volunteer management**

In the final year of the project, the focus has shifted from active volunteer recruitment and towards consolidation of the existing volunteer base. The badger hub Virtual Badger Champion role has been kept open for new applicants. With no cap on capacity in terms of volunteer numbers, the management of this role is not considered onerous. Although there has been no active promotion of other roles, the project has accepted volunteers if they make an approach.

In autumn 2018, a ‘Leading and Managing Groups in Outdoor situations’ training course was provided for seven key volunteers, which led to the facility of using these suitably experienced volunteers as co-leaders on future guided survey days. This network of co-leaders has enabled the project to increase capacity in terms of group size; overcoming the ever-present demand of sufficient insurance cover for larger numbers.

These trained surveys leaders and co-leaders will also play a key role in the continuation of survey activity in the area after the project has finished.

This has been a rewarding and confidence-building experience for volunteers leading the excursion experiences, and also a great learning experience for group members visiting areas outside of their ‘patch’.

Since the above measures have been adopted, there has been a noticeable increase in group cohesion and in volunteer confidence. Volunteers have been working together to arrange their own surveys, excursions and sett monitoring visits, separate from the project activity. Many volunteers now undertake activities independently such as sett monitoring and trail camera projects.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

#### **5.4     Volunteer Support**

Focussed support for the volunteers has resulted in building up experience, confidence and group cohesion in the existing volunteer base. This support has included the provision of:

- more advanced training, eg wildlife crime awareness and Registered Badger Worker: Level One.
- more volunteer sessions such as trail cam sessions and guided survey days.
- opportunity to select specific sites for group surveys, based on locations local to them or ones where they have a particular interest
- special excursion days to participating volunteers’ local patches, where a volunteer brings the group to visit setts they know of in their area.
- social events such as a dinner and outing to a Chris Packham lecture on rewilding in Edinburgh.

#### **5.5     Volunteer Survey**

The project has again, this year, provided an opportunity – through an on-line survey - for volunteers to evaluate and describe their experiences and engagement with the project. The responses have been unanimously positive and the outcomes noted ranged around greater awareness of their general environment; a deeper knowledge and understanding of the natural habitat – including flora and fauna – with a much deeper knowledge of the badger population and their habitat.

On an individual and personal front, volunteers have reported significant increases in confidence:

*EG i. Overall this project has been life-changing for me*

*EG ii. .... stretch yourself out of your comfort zone .....ultimately enable you to grow and develop as a person.*

*EG iii. I feel useful, skilful and supported.*

The respondents have also reported a general increase in their fitness levels and an improvement in their physical and emotional health.

*EG i. ...levels of fitness improved remarkably over the project overcoming a very distance- limiting sciatic problem.*

*EG ii. .... helped me a lot with my dyspraxia. It is amazing what I am now capable of*

In addition, many volunteers have reported an increase in skills and knowledge and have appreciated the opportunities offered by the project to participate in the extensive research projects, training courses, seminars, and workshops. And in some cases, volunteers are working towards formal qualifications.

*EG i. ...learnt a lot that will help me in my future career.*

Not least, all of the respondents wrote about the joy of being with like-minded people, working together for a common benefit.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

*EG i. met some great people with differing experience and knowledge, whom I now regard as friends*

*EGii. Being out with the team has helped me gain more friends*

For complete feedback of year 3 responses: see Appendix 2

## **5.6       Events**

### **Scottish Badger Week**

A series of special events were held, including Facebook Live Badger Watch and a launch event talk with Alan Stewart (wildlife crime investigator) at Falls of Clyde. This year, an online ‘9 Days of Action’ campaign was included.

### **Two Weeks of Trail Cams**

This was a special initiative using trail cams in interesting sites found through the project.

### **Scottish Parliament Species Champion event**

A talk on the project at **Scottish Badgers Annual Conference** in Perth, October 2018

## **5.7       Working with young people**

The final round of Mammal Detectives Roadshows in Scottish Primary Schools came to an end in autumn 2018, bringing the total of young people trained through this initiative to 1659.

The focus in this initiative for year three has been in supporting the young Animal Ambassadors with trail camera sessions, litter picks in their local woods and regular mail-outs of resources and ideas for action. In year three of the project, 16 support sessions were delivered for the young Animal Ambassadors.

## **6           Raising and Maintaining the Profile**

From the outset, the project has recognised the importance of consistent and active promotional campaigns to raise and maintain awareness of the project and its aims and objectives. To this end, they have worked strategically to promote and report their activities, with formal and informal methods of getting their message across.

The Scottish Badgers website provides news and articles of interest: providing a focus for current and prospective interested parties.

### **6.1       External publicity**

Throughout the three years of operation, the project has received national publicity from a variety of media, such as: BBC Wildlife Magazine; the Scottish Wildlife Trust magazine and The Sunday Mail. Project personnel have also made appearances on popular television and radio programmes such as BBC Landward in September 2018; a feature on BBC Radio Scotland’s morning programme – during Badger Week - and BBC Radio Scotland’s Out of Doors programme. The youth project was also featured on the BBC News website, using trail camera footage collected by the children.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

**6.2     Communications and liaison:**

The project has continued to produce a bright and well-designed quarterly E-newsletter through MailChimp. With a current subscriber list of 96, which is a 10% increase from last year, members and volunteers can be kept up-to-date with future and current events. Colourful ‘action’ photographs capture the events and explain the methods and results from the volunteer activities

**6.3     Social Media**

There is a continuing online presence to promote the project and to raise awareness, with a Facebook page; a Twitter profile; appearances on the YouTube channel; a web page on Scottish Badgers website and a *Badgers in the Landscape* blog – delivered through the News section of the SB website. The closed Facebook Group for the ‘Badgers in the Landscape’ project volunteers enables information sharing and findings/images from volunteer events. Volunteers have been able to build a sense of community through their involvement in this group and have requested that this resource remains available once the project has been completed.

**7       Other Activities**

**7.1     Assisting Police Scotland**

The project also works closely with Police Scotland, assisting them in site visits and such in relation to wildlife crime, which has seen an increase recently.

**7.2     Student research**

Three student research projects have been undertaken in this final year. The first, looking at environmental and human factors affecting badger emergence times has been completed. Two further studies, including the development of a sett recording App for mobile phones and a trail camera project looking at how well field signs indicate sett use by badgers (important information for badger court cases) will be completed by the end of the project.

**7.3     Fundraising**

The project has acted on recommendations from the Year One Project Evaluation to investigate different ways of raising additional funds for Scottish Badgers. They continue with the ‘entry by donation’ approach to funded training events such as badgers for beginners and wildlife crime awareness. And volunteers have taken on various fundraising initiatives such as the KiltWalk and creating badger art and Christmas decorations to sell.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

**8       Matching the Funding Objectives: Outcomes for All**

**8.1     Outcomes for heritage**

**Heritage is in better condition and better managed**

The joint-working approach and partnerships with the diversity of wildlife groups have promoted a comprehensive understanding of the issues and has promoted, therefore, a united response to the management and maintenance of the landscape.

The project has involved local people, helping with the conservation of the area. In addition to the volunteers moving around the badger sites, the use of trail cameras has enabled the sets and surrounding areas to be surveyed remotely. Any actual or potential destruction / dereliction of the landscape, fly tipping etc can - easily and swiftly - be reported.

**Heritage is identified / recorded**

Throughout the life of the project, volunteers have located and recorded over 388 new setts through guided badger survey days; an increase in the number recorded in the two years previous in this area.

The surveys and the trail camera work have enabled more information to be fed into existing recording system schemes and through photographic evidence of wildlife movement, changes in the landscape can be more evident.

People are more aware of wild-life crime in their area, and the project has developed a one day course showing how to recognise signs of wildlife crime and what to do when they are discovered.

Whilst moving around the area, previously hidden examples of wildlife have been discovered, such as a rare fungus, which appears to be one of only two examples of this specie.

**Heritage is better interpreted and explained**

By the on-going use of guided badger surveys and monitoring events, local people have become more engaged with the landscape and are able to understand the badger’s place in the community.

By the innovative use of blogs, YouTube videos, slots on local radio, the volunteers have promoted the idea of heritage to a far wider audience than ever before. All people, whether they are local to the area or across the world, can understand the natural habitats and biodiversity of the area.

**8.2     Outcomes for people**

**People have learnt about heritage, developed skills and have had an enjoyable experience**

The Mammal Detective sessions carried out with school children in South Lanarkshire have resulted in 40 children being chosen as Animal Ambassadors. The support provided has enabled them to deepen and intensify their knowledge of the countryside around them.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

The virtual badger champions involve volunteers not traditionally involved in community activities, but have been able to develop - in a novel way - new skills and knowledge of the landscape.

Providing the access to increased skills and knowledge has helped to build confidence in individuals; many have gained qualifications and are moving on to take more responsibility, such as moving into the management of the project; forming and running their own groups; becoming self-sustaining, with support from council.

### **8.3     Outcomes for communities**

#### **More people have engaged with heritage**

The Badger Hub has promoted the engagement with heritage in a novel and exciting way; consistently attracting large numbers of volunteers. The virtual Badger Champion role has used the social media network, which has the potential to accommodate unlimited volunteer involvement. And, through the dissemination of their findings, can ‘spread the word’ to others not currently engaging with the project objectives.

#### **The community is a better place to live, work or visit and the local economy is boosted**

With the work of mapping and monitoring of the badger setts, the area is becoming more attractive to visitors, who want to share this experience. Local residents also have a more attractive site to visit; instilling a sense of pride and a stronger sense of belonging.

Volunteers are coming into the area from other locations and are able to report back to friends and family about the enjoyment they have experienced; thus encouraging others to visit the landscape.

#### **The organisation is more resilient**

The success of the partnership working enabled the project to create a firm base with which to develop new and creative activities and events. These activities and events were well always publicised and promoted and the resulting interest and involvement of the community enabled them to carry out more work; attract. More volunteers have been engaged; and have provided a sound support structure for those people wanting to develop further in the area of heritage.

## **9       Conclusions**

The project has ably demonstrated, in its three years of operation, how its work has reached – and often far exceeded – their stated objectives within The Lottery Heritage Fund application. They have comprehensively evidenced Outcomes for All examples of the fit within the three strands of heritage, people and community. The events and activities have continued to be on-track at the end of this final year of the grant; the project continuing to work hard to promote and support the engagement of local people: helping them to become invested in the project going forward.

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

The initial research and preparatory work carried out during the life of the application to LHF ensured that the work of the project could commence in a timely manner following notification of a successful Lottery application submission. This has ensured that:

- a. the need for the proposed work was clearly evidenced
- b. initial clarity and focus ensured targeted and professional promotion and marketing
- c. the project had the necessary support from other professionals
- d. individuals and groups engaged with it
- e. effective wildlife partnerships have been established and maintained.

The partnership working – an integral and vital part of the project – helped the project to maximise the impact of their work and to build a sustainable network to support current and future activities. Activities have fostered co-operation amongst various facets of the natural heritage landscape within the South Lanarkshire area.

EG: One partnership reported an ‘evolution of the relationship’; creating ‘a shared vision’; helping to promote a ‘legacy of volunteers and volunteering’ in the South Lanarkshire region.

EG: Another spoke of the project’s passion of ‘fighting for the common cause’ of wildlife safety.

The innovative and far-sighted approach to engaging with volunteers - using current technology and with an understanding of people’s priorities and interests - has enabled the project to attract non-traditional participants in their work and, therefore, promote and encourage inclusivity.

The number of volunteers that the project has attracted belies its size and its continued success is due in no small measure to the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff members of the project. Responses to the surveys in years two and three demonstrated how this enthusiasm and commitment encouraged the volunteers to become more aware of their own skills and strengths and their health and self-confidence has risen measurably. The overall satisfaction with the project is very high and this is demonstrated, in no small measure, by the amount of detail and enthusiasm that volunteers showed as they described and evaluated their engagement with the work of the project.

The support and development provided by the project has encouraged the volunteers to use their own initiative; extending the work to their home locations. The experience of working with the project has acted as a stepping stone to other volunteer activities: working together to arrange their own surveys, excursions and sett monitoring visits, separate from the project activity. This has given the volunteers the confidence to undertake activities independently such as sett monitoring and trail camera projects.

All in all, this has led to a greater awareness, by both professional and volunteers, of the huge biodiversity of the landscape of South Lanarkshire and the surrounding areas.

The responses from the on-line survey have been unanimously positive and the outcomes noted ranged around greater awareness of their general environment; a deeper knowledge and understanding of the natural habitat – including flora and fauna – a growing commitment to supporting and conserving our natural species; and motivation to be actively involved in the promotion of the wider objectives of the project.

The work and enthusiasm of the volunteers has been matched, in no small way, by the enthusiasm and hard work expended by all those involved, which has motivated mutual interest in the work amongst the key players and agencies. Much of the success of the volunteer activities and training opportunities can be

**‘Badgers in the Landscape –  
Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’  
Evaluation Report:           Year Three**

attributed to the work, skill and enthusiasm of the project manager. The dedication she has shown for badgers specifically – and the natural heritage generally – has inspired significant numbers of volunteers to advance in the area of protection and preservation of their habitat; taking them far beyond the initial involvement with the project. Many of the respondents specifically and warmly praised the work of the project manager and the following comment from respondent no. 6 encapsulates the impact that Elaine had on the work and the volunteers.

*Project Worker Elaine Rainey is a one in a million leader who is passionate about badgers and is very supportive of her volunteers. Her skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, and understanding of people have made this project special and unique.*

The strategic approach to publicity and promotion is an effective platform: ensuring the steady growth of awareness of the project’s work and creating a legacy of understanding of the work of the project, but also of the wider issues within the natural heritage areas of South Lanark.

## **10       Developments beyond the funding period**

The hard work and planning that has been evident throughout the three years of the project has ensured that the successes and improvements within the landscape will not just fade away.

The partnerships formed through the project have been so successful that agreement has been made to work together going forward. Following extensive discussions, the project decided to enter into a formal partnership with Scottish Wildlife Trust in a bid to open up activities to a wider audience and within a broader geographical reach.

At the end of 2018, the project received funding from HLF for a 3-yr skills development programme involving SWT, South Lanarkshire Council, Get Walking Lanarkshire, Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership, Action for Children, Enable Scotland, Autism Scotland, local community groups and an independent public speaking consultant.

Plans are in place for the project’s social media channels to be adopted by project volunteers, who will also be working together to plan surveys, monitor key setts and continue with the trail camera project. Hub volunteers will continue to be supported through the new project and schools will be directed towards relevant resources to enable them to continue their Animal Ambassador activities independently

## **11       Acknowledgements**

The evaluator would like to express thanks to everyone who contributed to this study over the three years.

J Clifton  
Devon Associates